

Lev 1:1-5:26 Torah Reading (Parshat VaYikra)
English version to be sung to the Torah tropes by Len Fellman
Latest version March 25, 2020

1:1[And He called]to Moses. Thus spoke YHWH[to him] from the Tent of Meeting, saying:
2[You must speak]to the children of Israel and say to them, “Anyone[who comes] [to bring from your midst] an offering to YHWH,
[then from the animals], from the herd[or from the flock]you must take your offering.
3[If he would offer]his sacrifice[from the herd], a male without blemish,[he must bring near],
[to the entrance]of the Tent of Meeting he [must bring it],[of his own free will],[before YHWH].
4 He must lean his hand on top of the head of the offering. It is accepted of him, as atonement upon him.
5 [And he must slay]the young bull before YHWH. [Then there must be brought forth]by the sons of Aaron, the priests—the blood.
[They must sprinkle]the blood on the altar all around,[there at the entrance]of the Tent of Meeting.
6 [He (the worshipper) must have it skinned]—the offering, and cut up into its sections.
7 [Then shall be arranged]—by the sons[of Aaron] [ha Cohen]—fire upon the altar, [They must lay out wood][on the fire].
8 [They must arrange]—the sons of Aaron, who are the priests—all of the sections, the head[as well as the fat],
on the wood that was laid on the fire, there[upon the altar].
9 The intestines and the feet he must wash with water.
[It must be turned into smoke]by the priest in its entirety on the altar,[an offering of fire]of pleasing fragrance to YHWH.
10 [If from the flock] [is to be his korban]—[from the sheep] or from the goats, is his offering, a male without blemish,[he must bring forth].
11 He will slaughter it at [that side] [of the altar] [that is on the north], before YHWH,
[and they will scatter the blood]—the sons of Aaron,[who are the priests]—[they will throw the blood] [on the altar], all around.
12 He will cut the animal into sections, with its head [and with its fat].
Then must arrange the priest the sections on the wood that was laid on the fire, there, upon the altar.
13 The intestines and the feet he must wash with water.
[It must be brought]by the priest in its entirety, [and be turned into smoke] on the altar.
an offering[it shall be]—[an offering of fire] [end aliyah]of pleasing fragrance to YHWH.

1:14[Now in fact if] [it is from the birds]—his burnt offering to YHWH,
 [he shall bring forth] [from the turtle doves] [or indeed] from the young pigeons—his offering.
 15[It will be brought] by the priest to the altar[who will pinch off] its head,[turning it into smoke] on the altar,
 and drain its blood on the wall of the altar.
 16[He shall remove its crop with its feathers. He will then throw them] on the side of the altar[to the east],[toward the place] of fatty ashes.
 17[He shall tear it] open[with its feathers]—but not[divide it].[It will be turned] into smoke by the priest on the altar, on the wood[that is] on the
 fire. A burnt[offering it is]—[an offering by fire] of pleasing fragrance to YHWH.
 2:1[But when any person] [comes forth to present] an offering[of a grain gift] to YHWH,[finest wheat meal] must be his offering.
 [He shall pour] [over it] oil, and lay upon it frankincense.
 2[Then he must bring it] to the sons[of Aaron]—the priests. The priest shall scoop out from it a full handful[from its fine flour] [and from its oil]
 [along with] [all of the frankincense]. It shall be turned to smoke by the priest—a reminder portion—on the altar,
 [an offering by fire] of pleasing fragrance to YHWH.
 3[And the remainder] [of the meal offering] [shall be for Aaron] [and for his sons]. It is holy of holies, among the fire offerings to YHWH.
 4[And when] [you bring forth] a meal offering that was baked in an oven,
 [it must be choice flour]:[cakes that are] unleavened, mixed with oil, and with wafers unleavened, spread with oil.
 5If a meal offering on a griddle is your offering,[then choice flour] mixed with oil and unleavened, it must be.
 6[You must] break it[into small pieces] and pour over it oil. [end aliyah] [A *minchah* offering] [is what this is].
 7If a grain gift in a pan is your offering, with choice wheat in oil [it shall be made].
 8 You shall bring[the grain gift],[presenting an offering] [that has been made] in any of these ways to YHWH.
 It shall be brought to the priest,[who shall take it up] to the altar.
 9[He will lift out]—the priest[will remove from the *minchah*] the[reminder portion] [and turn it to smoke] on the altar,
 [an offering of fire] of pleasing fragrance to YHWH.
 10[And the remainder] [of the meal offering] shall be for Aaron and his sons. It is holy of holies, among the fire offerings to YHWH.

2:11 [Any meal offering] [that you] bring forth to YHWH, you must not make with leaven,
because with any leaven and any honey [you may not cause it] [to go up in smoke] as a fire offering to YHWH.

12 [As an offering] [of first yield] you may bring them forth to YHWH, but to the altar, they may *not* go up, as a pleasing fragrance.

13 [Every offering]—[of your grain gift]—[it must with salt] be seasoned.
You [must not leave out] [the salt] of your covenant [with your God], from [your meal offering]. On all your offerings, you must include salt.

14 [And when you bring] an offering of first fruits to YHWH,
[new ears of grain] parched in fire, kernels [of fresh grain] [you shall bring forth] as your offering of first fruits.

15 [You shall put] [upon it] oil, and place upon it frankincense. A *minchah* it is.

16 Turned to smoke by the priest [will be the reminder portion]. From its kernels and from its oil [along with] all its frankincense:
[*end aliyah*] [a fire offering it is] to YHWH.

3:1 If a sacrifice of well-being is his offering,
if from the cattle he [brings it forth], whether male or female: wholly sound he must bring it before YHWH.

2 [He shall lay] his hand on the head of his offering [and have it slaughtered] at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.
[Then they are to throw the blood]—[the descendants] of Aaron ([these being the priests])—[they must fling the blood] on the altar all around.

3 [He shall bring forth] from the sacrifice of well-being [a fire offering] to YHWH:
the fat that covers the innards, and [all the fat] that is about the innards,

4 and also the two kidneys and the fat [that is on them], which is on the tendons,
and the lobe on the liver, [along with the kidneys], [he must remove].

5 [They must turn it] [to smoke]—[the descendants of Aaron]—on the altar with [the burnt offering] that lies on the wood, that is on the fire,
[an offering by fire] of pleasing fragrance to YHWH.

6 [Now if from the flock] [is what he brings forth] as a sacrifice of well-being to YHWH, either male or female, [wholly sound] [he must present it].

7 If a sheep is what he brings as his offering, then he must present it before YHWH,
8 and lay his hand on the head of his offering, and [slaughter it] in front of the Tent of Meeting.
[Then they must throw the blood]—the descendants [of Aaron]—[they must fling the blood] on the altar all around.

3:9 [He then shall bring forth] [from the sacrifice] [of well-being] [as a fire-offering] to YHWH: its fat—[the broad tail] in its entirety,
 [close to the backbone], [he must remove it], and the fat that covers the innards, and all [of the fat] that is on the innards,
 10 and the two kidneys and the fat that is [on them], that is, on the tendons,
 and the lobe on the liver, [along with the kidneys], [he must remove them].
 11 It will be turned to smoke by the priest on the altar, food as a fire offering to YHWH.
 12 [Now if a goat] is his offering, [he must bring it forth] before YHWH.
 13 [He will] [lay his hand] on its head and [slaughter it] [in front of] the Tent of Meeting.
 [Then they must throw]—the descendants [of Aaron]—[they must fling the blood] on the altar all around.
 14 [He will bring forth] [from it] his offering: a fire-offering to YHWH: and the fat that covers the innards, and [all of the fat] that is on the innards,
 15 and the two kidneys and the fat that is [on them], that is, on the tendons,
 and the lobe on the liver, [along with the kidneys], [he must remove them].
 16 It will be turned to smoke by the priest on the altar, food [as a fire offering]—a pleasing fragrance: all the fat [is for YHWH].
 17 It is a law for all time, throughout your generations, in all [of your dwelling places].
 [end aliyah] As for all fat and all blood: [you may not consume it].

4:1 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,
 2 [you must speak] to [the children of Israel], as follows: [Any person] who sins inadvertently [regarding one] of the commandments of YHWH
 doing what [must not be done]; [if he should do] [any one] of these:
 3 [If it should occur] [that the priest] [who has been anointed] [commits a sin]—brings guilt upon the people, [he must thereby bring forth]
 because [of his transgression] [that he has committed] a bull [from the herd that] [is wholly sound] to YHWH, as a *chattat* offering.
 4 And [he must bring the bull] [to the entrance] of the tent of meeting before YHWH
 and lay his hand on the head [of the bull], and slaughter the bull in the presence of YHWH.
 5 [And he must take]—the priest, the anointed one, some blood from the bull, and bring it in to the Tent of Meeting.

4:6 [And he shall dip]—[the priest must then dip] his finger in the blood,
 and sprinkle some blood [a full seven] times before YHWH, [in front of] the curtain of the sanctuary.

7 [Then he shall put]—the priest puts some blood [right upon the horns] of the altar [from which goes up] incense before YHWH,
 [the altar that is] in the Tent of Meeting, [and as for all] | the blood [that remains from the bull]
 [he will spill out] at the base of the altar [of burnt offering] [that is at the entrance] of the Tent of Meeting.

8 [And all of the fat] of the bull of the sin-offering, [he must set aside] from it,
 the fat that covers the innards, and all of the fat, that is attached to the innards,
 9 as well as the two kidneys and the fat that is [about them], that is [on the tendons]
 and on the lobe of the liver, along with the kidneys,—[he shall remove it],

10 Just as [it is set aside] from the ox of the sacrifice for peace. [They shall be burned up] [by the priest] upon the altar of burnt offering.

11 The skin of the bull [and all of its flesh] along with its head, with its legs and its entrails and its offal.

12 He will bring [all of the rest of the bull] outside the camp to a place that is clean [where they pour out] the ashes,
 [where he will] [burn it up] [on pieces of wood], with fire where the ashes are poured out, [there it shall be burned].

13 If [the whole assembly] of Israel [sins in ignorance], and hidden is the matter from the eyes of the congregation,
 [in that they should do] one [of all those commandments] [of YHWH] that should not be done, [and they incur guilt].

14 [When it becomes known]—the offense which they have committed therein, they must bring forth—the congregation—
 a bull, [a young one from the herd] [as a sin offering], and they shall bring it [in front of] the Tent of Meeting.

15 [And they shall lay their hands]—the elders [of the assembly] [must lay their hands] on the head of the bull, before YHWH
 and slaughter the bull before YHWH.

16 [And there shall bring] the priest who is anointed, some blood from the bull to the Tent of Meeting.

17 [And he must dip]—[the priest must then dip] his finger in the blood,
 [and proceed to sprinkle it] [a full seven] times before YHWH in front of the curtain.

18 [And some of the blood] [he shall put upon] | the horns [of the altar] that is before YHWH which is in the Tent of Meeting.
 [All of] [the remaining blood] [he shall pour out] at the base of the altar of burnt offering, [which is at the entrance] to the Tent of Meeting.

4:19 And all the fat, [he shall set aside] from it, and turn it to smoke, on the altar.

20 He shall do [with the bull] [just as] he did with the bull [of the *chattat* offering] just so [he must do *with* it], [thus making atonement] [on their behalf], the priest will effect their forgiveness.

21 He shall [bring the bull] outside the camp and proceed to burn it, just as [he had burned] the other bull—[the first one].

A *chattat* offering for the community, it is.

22 When it is a chieftain, who sins—[if he should commit] one [of all the commandments] of YHWH his God—[among those commands] [that ought not to be done] by mistake, [and he incurs guilt],

23 [or it is made known] [to him] [his offence] of which he has sinned, therein, [then he must bring] [as his *korban*] a young goat, a male without blemish.

24 He must lay his hands on the head of the goat and [slaughter it] [in the same place] at which is slaughtered a burnt offering before YHWH. [A *chattat* offering] it is.

25 Then will take the priest some blood from the *chattat* with his finger, [and place it on] the horns of the altar of burnt offering. The blood [he will then pour out] at the base of the altar of burnt offering.

26 [And all its fat] [he will turn to smoke] on the altar, just like the fat [of the peace offerings].

[Making atonement] [on his behalf], [the priest will absolve him] [end aliyah] of his sin—[he will be forgiven].

27 [If there is a person]—[some individual]—who sins unintentionally: [one of the people] of the land (of the *am haaretz*), [if he should commit] one [of those commandments] [of YHWH] that ought not to be done, [and he incurs guilt],

28 [or [it is made known] [to him] his offence by which he has sinned, he must bring his *korban*: [a young goat] [without blemish], a female, for his offence which he has committed.

29 He must lay his hands on the head of the *chattat*, and slaughter the *chattat* in the place [of the burnt offering].

30 Then will take the priest [some of the blood] with his finger [and place it on] the horns of the altar of burnt offering, [the remaining blood] [being poured out] at the base of the altar.

31 All the fat [he must take away] just as was removed the fat that was on the sacrifice of well-being. [It shall be turned to smoke] by the priest on the altar, a pleasing fragrance, to YHWH, [making atonement] [on his behalf], [the priest will absolve him of his sin]. He will be forgiven.

4:32 [If it be a sheep] that he brings as his *korban*, his *chattat*, a female without blemish, [he must bring in].
 33 He will lay his hands on the head of the *chattat* and slaughter it as a *chattat* [in the very place] at which is slaughtered the burnt offering.
 34 Then will take the priest some blood from the *chattat* with his finger, [and place it on] the horns of the altar of burnt offering.
 The blood [he will then pour out] at the base of the altar
 35 All of its fat [he must take away], just as was removed the fat [of the sheep] on the altar [of the peace offering].
 [Turned to smoke] [by the priest] it will be on the altar, [along with] the fire-offerings of YHWH.
 [Making atonement] [on his behalf], [the priest will absolve him] of the sin he committed—he will be forgiven].

5:1 A soul—[any person who sins]—if he should hear the pronouncement of an oath, and he was a witness: he either saw or he knew, but he fails to testify, he thus bears guilt.
 2 [Or if] any person should [happen to touch] an object that is *tamei* [impure], [whether it be] the carcass of a beast [that is unclean] or the carcass [of a domestic animal] that is *tamei*, [or indeed], the carcass of a creeping thing that is unclean, the fact [being concealed from him], it makes him unclean; [he incurs guilt].
 3 And further, if he should touch uncleanness from a person, any *tum'a*, making him unclean through it, the fact being hidden from him, and he comes to know it, and incurs guilt;
 4 [This is also true], [if there is a person] who [makes an oath], uttered with his lips, to do something ill or [to do something good], [this which also includes] whatever [might be spoken] [by a person] in an oath, [and it is hidden] from him, when he becomes aware, he is guilty in any of these cases.
 5 When he is guilty in any of these matters, [then he must confess] how he has sinned thereby.
 6 He must bring [his guilt offering] into the presence of YHWH, on [account of the sin] that he has committed: a female [from the flock], [either a lamb], or a kid of the goats, [as a sin offering].
 [Making atonement] [over him], the priest [will absolve him of sin].
 7 [If it cannot reach]—[his hand cannot acquire]—enough for a sheep, he shall bring as a guilt offering for [the sin he committed]: two [turtle doves], or two young pigeons, to YHWH, one as a sin offering, and one as a guilt offering.

5:8[He shall] [bring them]to the priest.[He will bring forward] the one for the *chattat*-offering first,
[He will wring its neck]—[nipping off its head], from the nape of the neck, but not totally sever it.

9 [He shall then sprinkle] from the blood of the *chattat* on the side-wall of the altar.

What remains of the blood must be drained at the base of the altar. The *chattat* offering is this.

10[The second bird] he shall make an *olah* [according to law].

[Making atonement] [over him], [the priest will absolve him] [end of aliyah] from the sin he committed], thus forgiving him.

11 [And if it can't reach]—his hand cannot acquire—the two[turtle doves], [or even] two young pigeons,

he must bring as his offering for [the sin he committed] [one-tenth measure] [of an *ephah*] of flour, as a *chattat*.

He must not put on it [any oil], nor must he put on it frankincense, because it is a sin-offering.

12 [He shall then bring it] to the priest. [Then will scoop up] the priest | [a small portion of it], enough to fill his hand,
a token portion to be burned on the altar, [along with] the fire-offerings to YHWH. The *chattat* offering is this.

13[Making atonement] over him, the priest [for his sin], [whereby he has sinned]. From any of these he is pardoned.

[The portion belongs to the priest], [like the meal offering].

14Then spoke YHWH to Moses as follows:

15[The soul] who commits a trespass, sinning inadvertently, [involving things sacred] to YHWH, [he must bring] his guilt offering to YHWH:
[a ram he must bring]—unblemished—[from the flock], [being convertible] into silver by the sanctuary weight, as a guilt offering.

16 For [that whereby] he sinned regarding the holy things, [he must make full payment], and a fifth must be added to it, giving it to the priest.
[Then the priest] [shall make atonement] [over him] with the ram of *asham* (guilt offering), granting pardon to him.

17 If a person commits a sin, [by engaging in] one [among all those commandments] of YHWH—the ones that are not to be done,
not knowing at first but then realizing his guilt, he bears his iniquity.

18[He must then bring] a ram [that is wholly sound] [from the flock] or the equivalent, as a guilt offering to the priest.

[Making atonement] over him, the priest [for his mistake], [whereby he has erred] when he did not know it; he is forgiven.

19 A guilt-offering it is. He has incurred guilt before YHWH.

5:20 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,

21 [When a person] commits a sin, breaking faith—making a breach, [against YHWH] by deceiving his fellow [as concerns a deposit] [or what is placed] in his hand (for safekeeping), or by robbery, or by defrauding his fellow,

22 [or if he should find] [a thing that was lost], and he lied about it, or swore to a falsehood, [for any one] [of all of the things] that might be done by a person, to incur guilt thereby.

23 [And it will be] when he sins and is guilty; he shall return the robbed object—the [thing that he stole]—or the fraud that he committed or the deposit that had been placed with him, or the lost item which he had found,

24 [or as to any matter] [regarding which] he had [sworn upon it], bringing falsehood: [he shall pay] back the principal and one-fifth [he must add] [to it], of whom to him [it does belong], [he shall give it], on the day he admits his guilt.

25 His guilt offering he must bring to YHWH:

a ram [wholly sound]—[without blemish, from the herd]—of the proper value, as a guilt offering to the priest.

26 [Making atonement] [on his behalf], [the priest will absolve him] before YHWH, thus forgiving him [for whichever one] [end aliyah] of the things he may have done, to incur guilt through it.

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta geresh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate the following pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which will have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (<i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
⏟Renew our days⏟	⏟‘She weeps bitterly’⏟	⏟a fire-offering to God⏟

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalsholet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (notably cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a very distinctive melody—for which purpose extra syllables fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “God” or “Adonai”.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)